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RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 002214

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, NEA/PI, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA,
B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN
LONDON FOR TSOU
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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION - WOMEN TAKE ON THE ELECTORAL
CHALLENGE

Block Quotes

Sunday, June 11, 2006

-- Abdul Aziz Abdul Karim Al-Hindal commented in the progressive Arabic daily Al-Qabas under the title "Elections with a New Flavor" (6/11): "I think that after women received their full political rights we can say that the image and flavor of our parliamentary elections have changed. In the past, it was characterized by its roughness as both voters and candidates were men. The electoral headquarters, the political rhetoric, and campaigns were all aimed at men.... The real flavor of this year's elections lies in the types of issues that must be presented and adopted. I hope the redistricting issue does not consume all of our time, because the number of women voters is much more than that of men."

-- Dahouk Binwan Al-Binwan criticized in the progressive Arabic daily Al-Qabas under the title "When Everyone Abandoned Them" (6/11): "Kuwaiti women are participating in a variety of activities to gain as much knowledge as possible to help them choose the right candidate for the National Assembly. All official entities concerned with information, culture, and planning have abandoned women. The media abandoned Kuwaiti women and so have educational entities. Women, in turn, raced out to seminars, electoral headquarters, newspapers, and Internet sites in an effort to enlighten themselves.... The lack of effort, planning, and acknowledgement of the political future of both sexes is shameful and painful.... Honestly, Kuwaiti women are performing a miracle through their 'self-motivated' efforts.... Yes, everyone abandoned Kuwaiti women, but Kuwaiti women will not abandon their love of challenge."

-- Ahmed Abdul Rahman Al-Kous penned in the moderate Arabic daily Al-Watan under the title "The Islamists and the Aware Women's Vote" (6/11): "It is a blessing that women in our beloved Kuwait are well informed. Many of them think deeply and with reflection. Many former MPs and writers are betting that women will support the Islamists. Women of all trends and ideologies lean toward a strong, honest, and loyal man. These qualities are usually found in the Islamists and independents who have religious tendencies. I have mentioned more than once that women, even if not religious, care for the interest of the country and that is why they stand in support of the Islamists. That is also what the newspapers and daily analyses have shown in many districts."

-- Khalil Ali Haidar questioned in the moderate Arabic-language daily Al-Watan under the title "This Corruption, Can Kuwait Handle It? (6/11): "Corruption has become the main theme of many of the

candidates' speeches. The stories being told warn of real catastrophes financially, administratively, and politically. Kuwait's problem in relation to this monster is that we are the least able to withstand its results in comparison to other mid-size or larger Arab or third world countries. Even if oil revenues and the surplus were able to cover it up the political and social effects are no less destructive than the financial loss."

-- Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University, Dr. Shamlan Yousef Al-Issa questions in the pro-government Arabic daily Al-Seyassah under the title "Will Women's Entry Have an Effect?" (6/11): "Many questions remain about the results of the elections to be held at the end of this month. Many citizens ask about our expectations and it is very difficult to predict the outcome of the elections with the entry of women as a new factor. The question remains, how will women vote? Moreover, will there be fundamental changes because of women's entry into the elections? It is certain that women's entry will affect the elections; however, the significance of that change is not known. Will it be for the better? More specifically, towards a better future for women and society or will matters continue to change slowly on all levels?"

-- Salih Al-Shaijy commented in the moderate Arabic daily Al-Anbaa under the title "Elections Market" (6/11): "The elections market has opened wide 24 hours a day and it accepts all types of commodities. Everything goes and all are allowed to see and hear. People should weigh what they are hearing with the scale of honesty and lies and not take matters for what they superficially appear to be and end up buying everything offered on the market. What is being offered these days by some, if not all, candidates is that the government is after them and is spending money to guarantee their failure. They speak of billions that have been withdrawn in cash to be spent against them.... It is important to seriously consider these stories and to question their authenticity."

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-- Dr. Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al-Awadi editorialized in the moderate Arabic daily Al-Anbaa under the title "We Want it 25" (6/11): "I am sure this title will excite many because we somehow refuse this number that we chose in our 1980 elections. There have been five sessions of the National Assembly, the members of which were elected based on that number. I do not know how the last session became the corrupt one. As for the other sessions, apparently they were not corrupt despite the fact that the electorate is the same, the districts are the same, and more than half the Members were re-elected in the last four sessions. In my opinion, calls for five or ten districts are but excuses for some losers on the electoral field."

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